

# Spectrum



Photos by Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan Plackemeier

Sailors assigned to Navy Information Operations Command, Georgia, and returning from a deployment, receive a formal welcome home during the first NAVIOCOM Georgia Family Readiness Group Welcome Home Ceremony April 4 at the Family Outreach Center on post.

## Navy welcomes deployed Sailors home

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Sailors assigned to Navy Information Operations Command, Georgia received a formal welcome home during the NAVIOCOM Georgia Family Readiness Group Welcome Home Ceremony 1 p.m. April 4 at the Family Outreach Center.

Eighty-eight Sailors dressed in the U.S. Navy Summer White Uniforms joined their Families and colleagues on the lawn of the center for a celebration of their safe return to Fort Gordon.

The Navy choral group, under the direction of Chief Petty Officer Joseph Obleton, sang an assortment of melodies including: "Anchors Away," "God Bless America," as well as the national anthem before the invocation was given. Jessica Roe, president of the Navy's Family Readiness Group, gave the opening remarks before introducing the commander of NAVIOCOM Georgia.

Twenty months ago there were no welcome ceremonies for our returning Sailors, said Navy Capt. Sean Filipowski, the commanding officer, NAVIOCOM Georgia. "I would like to especially thank our Family Readiness Group officers and volunteers for their devoted work, ensuring our deployed Sailors and their Families have received the care and recognition they so richly deserve. Please join me in a round of applause for the

[Navy's] Family Readiness Group: President Jessica Roe, Vice-President Amanda Rausch, Secretary Susan Rizi, and Treasurer Harmony Trassare, and all the volunteers who have helped our Family Readiness Group succeed so grandly!

"The Sailors before you, and those still in harm's way, have deployed literally around the world in myriad missions and platforms," Filipowski said.

"You, 'the few,' became the eyes and ears of commanders all across the globe," the commander said. "Your devotion and expertise saved lives every single day...your dedication drives the enemy to hide in dark places and live in fear of capture every night...there are service members and civilians who will never thank you, but we will. We here today...your Shipmates, your friends, your military Family...know the sacrifices you have made and will continue to make. We know the work you do. We know the

contributions you have made, and we say in unison and in a rousing chorus: Well done Shipmates and welcome home!"

Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, and one of the event's speakers, was introduced by the commander. Foley spoke briefly about spending some time on the U.S.S. Okla-homa. I realized after spending some time on the ship how proud I am to be in the Army and not the Navy," he joked. "But seriously deploying is becoming more frequent today and often it's to dangerous places," Foley said. It's important to know our Families are safe while we are away. Our ultimate goals are the same regardless of what branch we serve in."

The general summed up the purpose of the day's event. "Your commander is just trying to say thanks to you, guys and gals," Foley added. "We are proud to have you on this team."

Foley then joined Filipowski in the receiving line and extended personal greetings to each returning Sailor.

One of the Sailors in the receiving line was Senior Chief Petty Officer Anthony Rizi. According to his wife Susan, they have been stationed at Fort Gordon for three years. Susan Rizi said her husband has spent about two months at home during the time the couple has been assigned to the area. The rest of the time he has been deployed.

After the Family-style barbecue, door prizes were given away thanks to the generosity of local businesses in the Central Savannah River Area.



Photo by Bonnie Heater

(Left to right) Susan Rizi, secretary; Harmony Trassare, treasurer; Amanda Rausch, vice-president; and Christine Wenrich, incoming ombudsman, of the NAVIOCOM Georgia Family Readiness Group, worked with volunteers to make the Welcome Home ceremony happen for the 88 returning Sailors and their Families.



(Above left from left to right) Jessica Roe, Family Readiness Group president, Navy Capt. Sean Filipowski, NAVIOCOM Georgia commanding officer, and Susan Rizi, the FRG secretary, enjoy a humorous moment with one of their returning Sailors during the barbecue. (Above right) Sailors and their Families crowd into the kitchen of the Family Outreach Center for some conversation and home cooking during the barbecue.



(Above) Chief Petty Officer Joseph Obleton directs the Navy choral group through the national anthem at the NAVIOCOM Georgia Family Readiness Group Welcome Home ceremony. In the front row, (left to right), is Chief Petty Officer Amanda Edgington, Petty Officer 1st Class Nicole Hine-Cappa, Petty Officer 2nd Class Kristen Pyle, and Chief Petty Officer Andrea Hurley. In the back row is Petty Officer 2nd Class Scott Carter and Petty Officer 3rd Class Ryan Trenck. (Left) Navy Capt. Sean Filipowski, NAVIOCOM commanding officer, is joined by Brig. Gen. Jeff Foley, U.S. Army Signal Center and Fort Gordon commanding general, in recognizing Jessica Roe, FRG president, following her opening remarks at the NAVIOCOM Georgia Family Readiness Group Welcome Home Ceremony held April 4 at the Family Outreach Center on post. The event was made possible by the NAVIOCOM Georgia Family Readiness Group, volunteers and the generosity of local businesses in the CSRA.

